DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 415 SO 019 683

AUTHOR	White, Caryn
TITLE	Play Chinese Games. 1987, Revised.
INSTITUTION	Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	28p.
AVAILABLE FROM	East Asian Outreach Program; Yale University, Box 13A, Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520 ($4.00 stapled, $6.00 spiral).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Class Activities; Community Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *Experiential Learning; Foreign Countries; *Games; *Play; *Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS	*China; Chinese People

ABSTRACT

This document, designed to introduce all ages to a selection of popular Chinese games, describes these games and provides instructions and materials for making the items needed to play most of them. Section 1 suggests class activities that can be related to some of the games. Section 2 presents instructions for the physical or outdoor games of: (1) ti jianzi (kick shuttlecock); (2) tiao fangzi (hopscotch); (3) tiao xiangpi tiao (jumprope); (4) zhuazi (jacks); and (5) laoying zhui xiaoji (tag). Instructions for selected board or table games that appear in section 3 include: (1) ping pong; (2) tiaoqi (checkers); (3) weiqi (go); (4) xiangqi (chess); and (5) qiqiao ban (tangrams). Part 4 contains instructions on how to assemble a Chinese game kit. Drawings are included. (JHP)

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Play

Chinese Games

by Caryn White

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REVISED

1987

Yale University
East Asian Outreach
November 1985

PLAY CHINESE GAMES

This unit was originally prepared by Caryn White at the University of Arizona East Asia Resource Center for use with the Sonoran Heritage Series "PLAY." It was updated in 1985 for use by the East Asian Outreach Program, Yale University.

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revised 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction and classroom suggestions 1

Introduction to 1987 revision 3

II. Physical or Outdoor Games

1. Ti Jianzi - the kick shuttlecock 5
2. Tiao Fangzi - hopscotch 7
3. Tiao Xiangpi Tiao - jumprope 9
4. Zhuazi - jacks 10
5. Laoying zhui xiaoji - tag 11

III. Board or Table Games

1. Ping Pong 13
2. Tiaoqi - checkers 14
3. Weiqi - go 17
4. Xiangqi - chess 19
5. Qiqiao ban - tangrams 23

VI. Making a "Chinese Games Kit"

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to introduce people of all ages to a number of popular in China. The games introduced in this unit are by no means an exhaustive collection, but they represent the games that most Western children will find familiar, and are games that are played over most of China. There are regional variations and the names of some of the games may vary from area to area as well, but the general rules, the object and the spirit of fun remain the same no matter where one travels. This unit is unique in that it not only describes the games, but it provides instructions for making the items needed to play most of the games. The unit is divided into two sections; physical and board games.

Objectives:

Children will learn to play a number of Chinese games, learn the Chinese names for the games, and will also learn to make some of the items needed to play the games.

Children will gain an understanding of the universal nature of childhood play. It is hoped that children will come to realize that a number of games with which they are already familiar ("Chinese" jumprope, "Chinese" checkers) are really games from China, and that the modifier "Chinese" does not mean "strange" or "exotic." Further, it is hoped that the children, through making the items necessary to play some of the games, will come to realize that children all over the world have been able to make their fun with very simple items.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

A. If using the "Chinese Games Kit":

1. Set up a series of numbered activity "centers" in the classroom, and/or outside. (Depending upon the number of adults present to assist, the physical layout of the room, the weather, etc., you may wish to do the board games and physical games as separate activities.)

2. Have the children sit in a circle and introduce each game. You may wish to show the game, ask the children to name it if it is one with which they might be familiar and describe the rules of play. You might also ask them to guess what the other games might be and how they might be played.

3. Introduce the Chinese name for each game (the pronunciation is provided). It is important for the children to know that each game has its own name in Chinese which does not begin with the modifier "Chinese..."

4. After each game is introduced and the rules are understood, place that game on or at one of the activity centers. You might want to assign members of the class to write the names of the games (using the pinyin romanization used in the unit) onto pieces of construction paper to be used as signs at each "center" or "station".

5. Divide the children up into the number of groups that there are activity centers for, and send one group to each center. At this point, the adults who are supervising can roam from center to center to assist, answer questions or to observe the children.

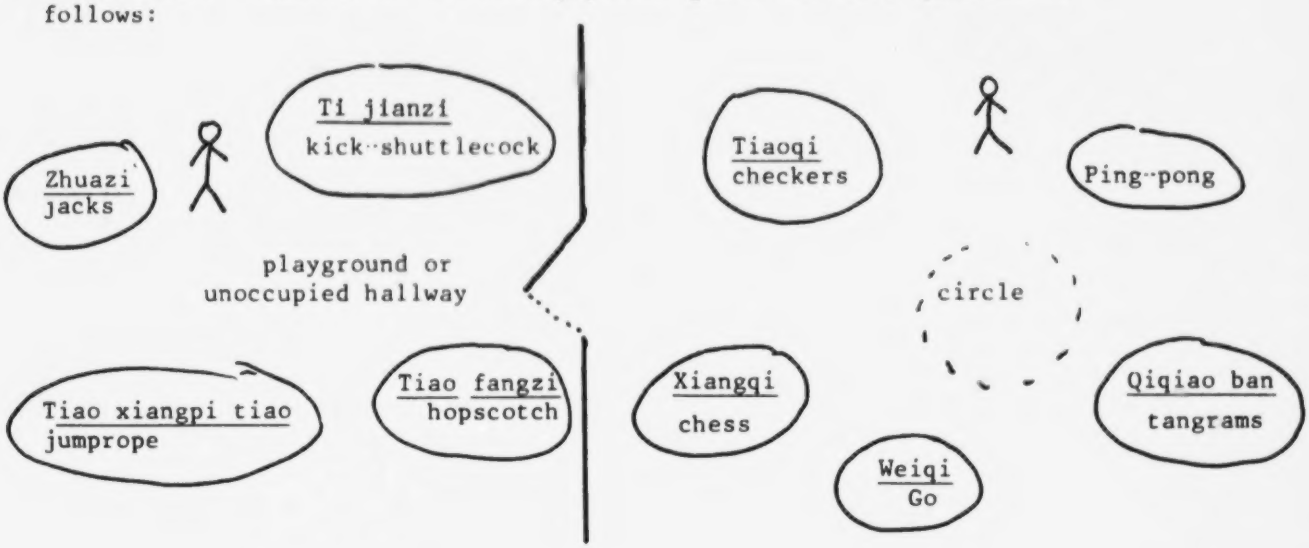
6. all the children to work at their games for 10 -- 15 minutes, depending upon the ages and attention spans of the children, and then have them rotate to the next center to play. Continue until the children have had a chance to try every game.

7. Gather the children back into a large group and have them talk about their experiences, frustrations, successes, favorites, etc.

IF MAKING GAMES:

1. Whether you use the "Chinese Games Kit" for the introduction, you may wish to have children make the games for which instructions have been provided. This can be done as a follow-up activity to the activity described above, having groups of students work together at one game, or by having motivated students make the games as extra work.

A successful combination of board/physical games has been operated as follows:



Please note: Ping pong can be set up on very small tables... it is not necessary to use a "tournament" ping-pong table. Chinese players often set up a game on any table surface, with or without a net. A teacher's desk is ideal if it can be cleared off.

INTRODUCTION TO REVISED EDITION

A number of changes have been made since 1985. The instructions on making ti jianzi have been revised (actually, the instructions have gone through a number of changes after field testing), and a toy which much more closely resembles the authentic item is the result. However, it isn't any easier to play. The pronunciation and instructions on how to write the Chinese numbers for tiao fangzi have been added, and instructions on how to make a tiao qi game set have been included. Now all three games included in this unit may be made by the students. As all three require grids of some sort, this provides ample opportunities for putting to practical (and fun) use the principles learned in geometry.

Every attempt has been made to correct errors. I am particularly grateful to the many teachers in the New Haven area who field tested the unit in their classrooms, and to my friend, Li Minru, who advised me on the games and entertained me with memories of his own childhood. He made me aware of the tremendous regional variations in how the games are made and played. For most of these games, there is no one "right" way to play. I would also like to thank Hong Jianzhong, a friend from Beijing who sent me, to my utter surprise, some 30 ti jianzi.

C. White
1987

I.

PHYSICAL OR OUTDOOR GAMES

踢毽子

Play

TI JIANZI

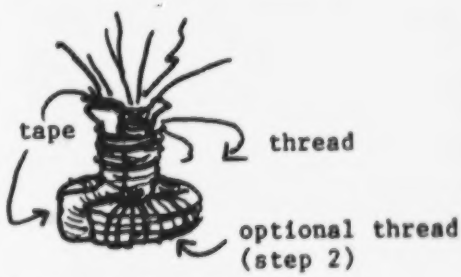
TI JIANZI (pronouced "tee jee-en ze", meaning "kick shuttle cock) is more a toy than a game. It can be seen all over China, particularly at New Year's time, when children have a long holiday from school. The idea of the game is to keep the toy in the air as long as possible by kicking it with the side of the foot or by kicking it from one player to another. To make a TI JIANZI you will need:

three or four 3/4" to 1" washers
cloth tape or electricians tape (as narrow as it can be found)
blunt tapestry needle
heavy-duty thread (#8)
three or four feathers

1. Stack the washers one on top of the other. Take a piece of the tape and cut it lengthwise into two narrow strips approx. 1/4" wide. Wrap these around the washers and leave 1 - 11/2" ends at the center.

2. (optional) Using the heavy-duty thread, thread the tapestry needle and wrap several layers of thread around the stack of washers to each side of the tape.

3. Group the feathers together so that the tips fan outward. Using the heavy-duty thread, wrap the quills together tightly. Continue to wrap the quills until a layer of thread almost as thick as the hole in the washers is formed. Leave approx. 12 to 18 inches of thread loose.



4. Stick the bound quills into the center of the washers between the tape ends. Hold the tape ends against the side of the bound quills and using the remaining 12-18 inches of thread, wrap around the tape ends and the quills. Tie the thread securely.

Traditionally, the ti jian zi was made with coins. Old Chinese coins were round with square holes in the centers.

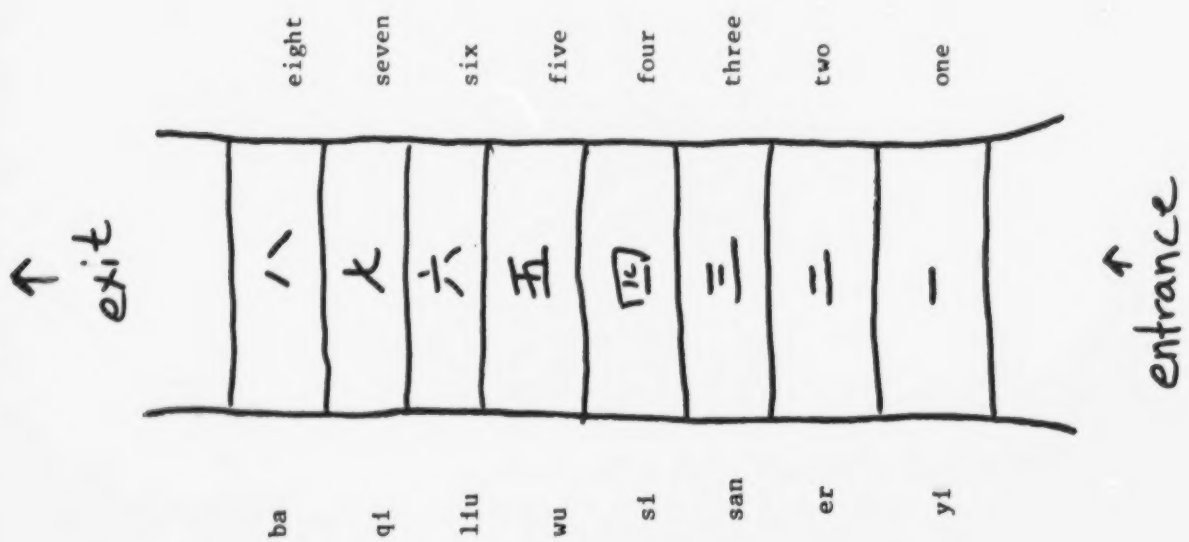
TO PLAY:

Drop the toy from about the waist level onto the side of your foot and kick it back up into the air. The object is to keep the toy in the air, kicking it with any part of the foot (or either foot) for as long as possible. Two or more may play by kicking the jianzi to one another. You will find that it takes a great deal of practice to become skilled at ti jianzi.

跳房子

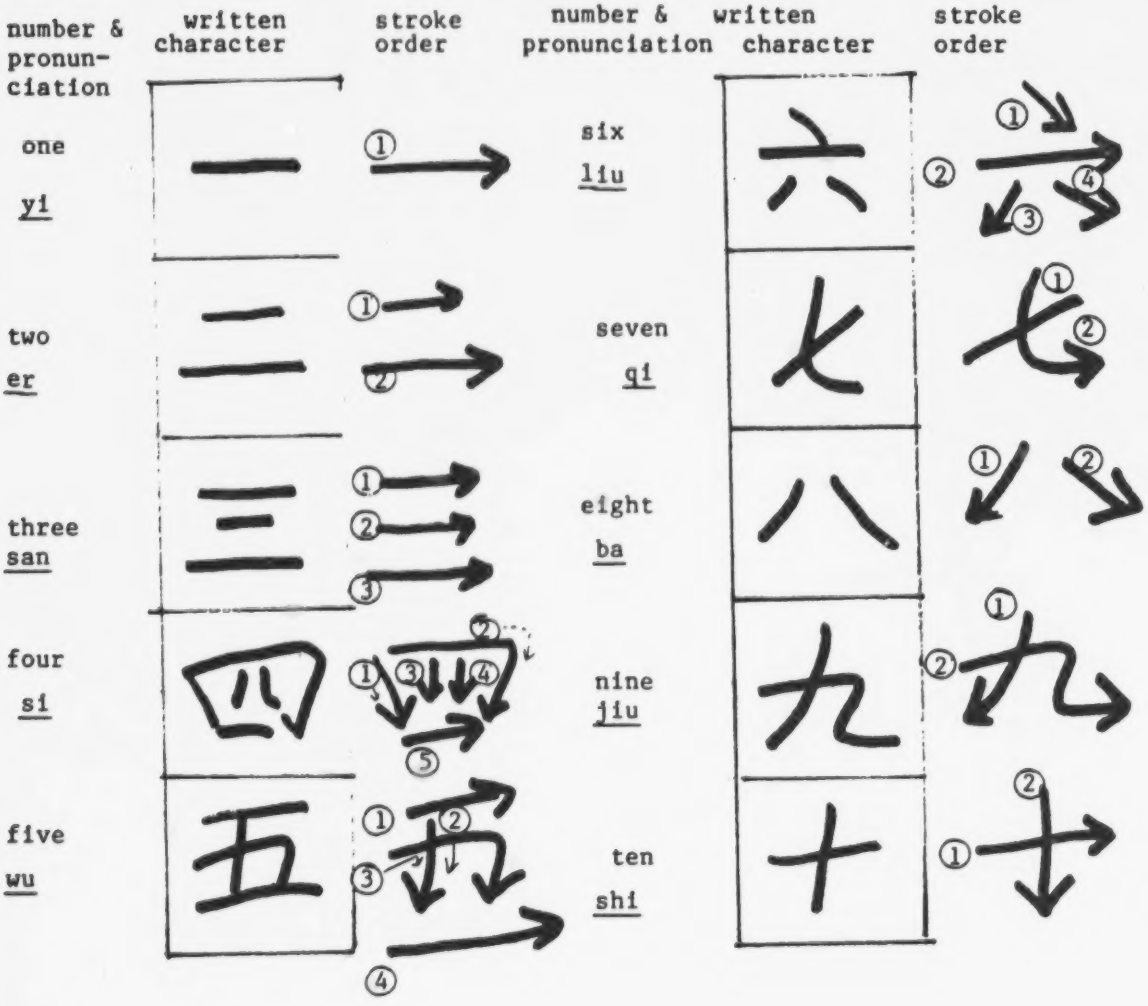
Play TIAO FANGZI

TIAO FANGZI (pronounced "tee-ow fahng ze") is similar to American hopscotch. TIAO means "jump" in Chinese, and FANGZI means "rooms". The object of the game is to jump through the rooms from the entrance to the exit. There are many regional variations on this game, and one version is made up of eight rooms. Players take turns tossing rocks into first, the first room, then the second, etc. Each player must hop over the rooms which have rocks in them, retrieve his or her own stone on the return trip, and toss again. Try making your game using the Chinese numbers.



THE NUMBERS ONE - TEN

Although the numbers one to eight are used in tiao fangzi, students can easily learn the numbers to ten and write them when playing this and other Chinese games. Students might also want to keep score in Chinese when playing other games.



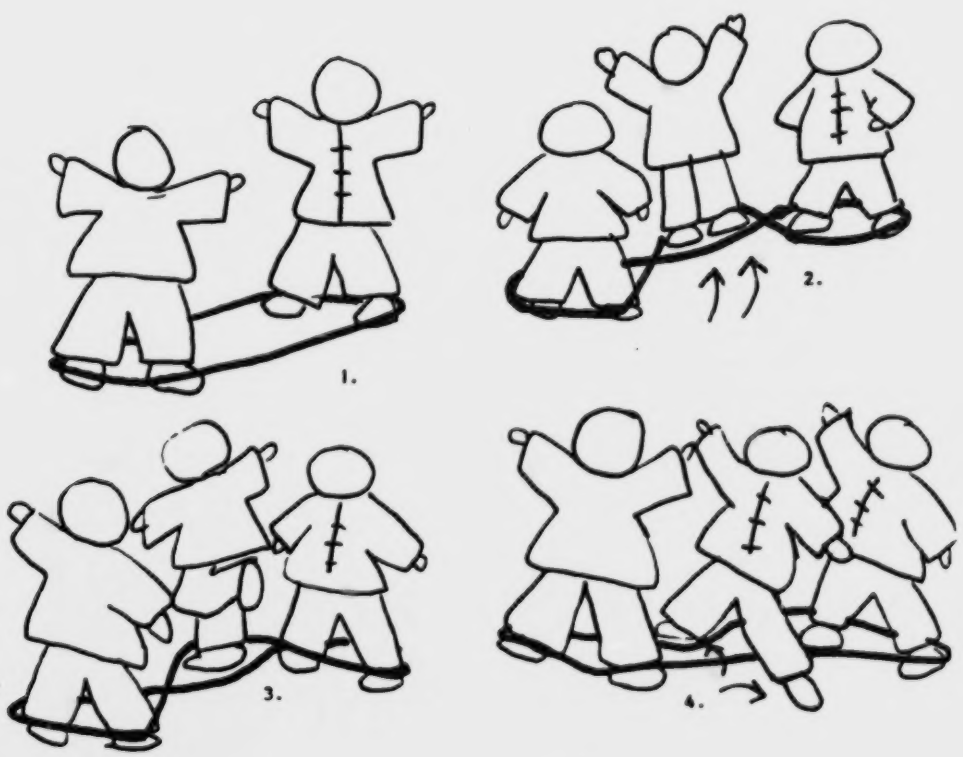
Chinese characters are always written the same way, using the same number of lines or strokes each time, and writing them in the same order. This is important for a number of reasons. It makes it easier for other people to read what someone has written. Counting the number of "strokes" in a character is the main way one finds a word in the dictionary.

跳橡皮條

Play TIAO XIANG PI TIAO

To make a Chinese jumprope (remember, the word for "jump" is TIAO , the word for "rubber band" is XIANGPI TIAO (pronounced syee--ang pee tee--ow), so a jumprope is a "jump rubber band") take a handful of rubber bands and loop them together until you have a string which is about seven or eight feet long. Tie the loose ends together.

To play:



抓子

Play ZHUAZI

ZHUAZI (pronounced jwa ze) is similar to American jacks. The object of the game is to pick up as many stones as possible before catching the bag. Instead of a rubber ball, Chinese children make a cloth ball filled with sand, rice or dried beans. It is similar to a beanbag. The items picked up can be as simple as stones. In some areas, Mah-jong tiles are used, the object being to turn as many of the tiles up on end as possible before catching the bag. To make your ZHUAZI, you will need:

a square piece of cloth about 8" x 8"
uncooked rice, dried beans, etc
ten small, smooth stones of approximately the same size
a needle and thread

Place the beans or rice onto the center of the cloth, and fold up the corners and edges, sewing them together. Make certain the stitching is tight, and the bag is somewhat round.

To play, take the stones into both hands and shake them out onto the ground. Using only one hand, toss the bag up into the air, and while it is up, pick up as many of the stones as possible, then catch the bag. If the bag falls to the ground, the player loses his or her turn, and another player tries.

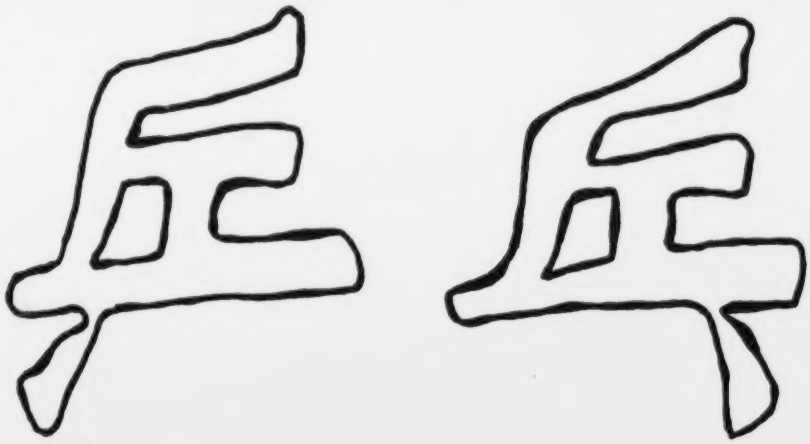
老鷹追小鷄

Play LAOYING ZHUI XIAOJI

LAO YING ZHUI XIAO JI means "the eagle chases the little chickens" and the game is similar to American "tag". LAO YING (pronounced Laow ying) is the eagle, ZHUI (pronounced jway) means "to chase", XIAO (pronounced sheeow) means "little", and JI (pronounced jee) means "chickens." The object of the game is for the eagle, Lao ying, to catch the little chickens, Xiao ji, one by one. Unlike American tag, however, the emphasis is on the group, and the little chickens must stay together under the protection of a mother hen whose job it is to protect the chicks. The children who are to be the chickens grasp one another around the waists, forming a chain with the mother hen at the lead. They are given a ten-count head start before the eagle tries to catch the "baby" chick (the child at the end of the line). The chicks must hold on to one another, and must follow the lead of the mother hen. This requires a great deal of cooperation and a group effort to protect the "baby." The eagle may "catch" a chick by tagging him or her. If the eagle is too successful, he may be required to use two hands to tag the chicks.

II.

BOARD OR TABLE TOP GAMES



Play **PING PONG**

Ping-pong, now an English word, is the original Chinese word for the game of table tennis. Table tennis was not invented in China, but it has become the national sport of China and is played avidly by people of all ages. It has become so closely associated with China that we use its Chinese name, ping pong, an onomatopoeic word which imitates the sound of the balls hitting the paddles and the table, as often as we use its original name, table tennis. Students in China often carry their own paddles around with them an strike up an impromptu game on any available table top. Inexpensive paddles may be purchased at the on-campus bookstores or sundry shops at most universities. It is not necessary to have a "tournament" size table to play ping pong. It can be played on a cafeteria table, a desk top, across two desks pushed together, or on any flat, rectangular table top. A net is not necessary. A smaller table requires more skill on the part of the players and is a good way to develop accuracy. It is generally better and certainly more fun to try to keep the ball in play by hitting it gently and accurately . Once one has become skilled at hitting the ball accurately, one can begin to practice hitting it hard.

Play

TIAO QI

Most American children know how to play the game, "Chinese Checkers." The Chinese name for the game is TIAO QI (pronounced tee-ow chee). TIAO means to jump, and QI is the word used to mean board games. Since you must jump the pieces over one another, the game is called "JUMP GAME."

The object of the game is to get your pieces across the star-shaped board and into the triangle of the opposing player by jumping pieces. A piece may not be moved unless it jumps another piece, either your own or one of the pieces of your opponent. The first player to get all of his pieces into the point of his opponent's diamond wins.

To make your own tiao qi set, see the instructions on the following pages.

TO MAKE TIAO QI:

While tiao qi is available in almost every toy store and import store, it is fun and educational to have children make their own board. If the class is studying geometry, making the tiao qi board could very easily become a geometry assignment. The board consists of six diamonds, or twelve equilateral triangles, arranged into a star. Each point of the star (the parallelogram formed by combining two triangles) is further divided into 18 equilateral triangles. A circle is placed at the point of each of these smaller triangles.

Materials:

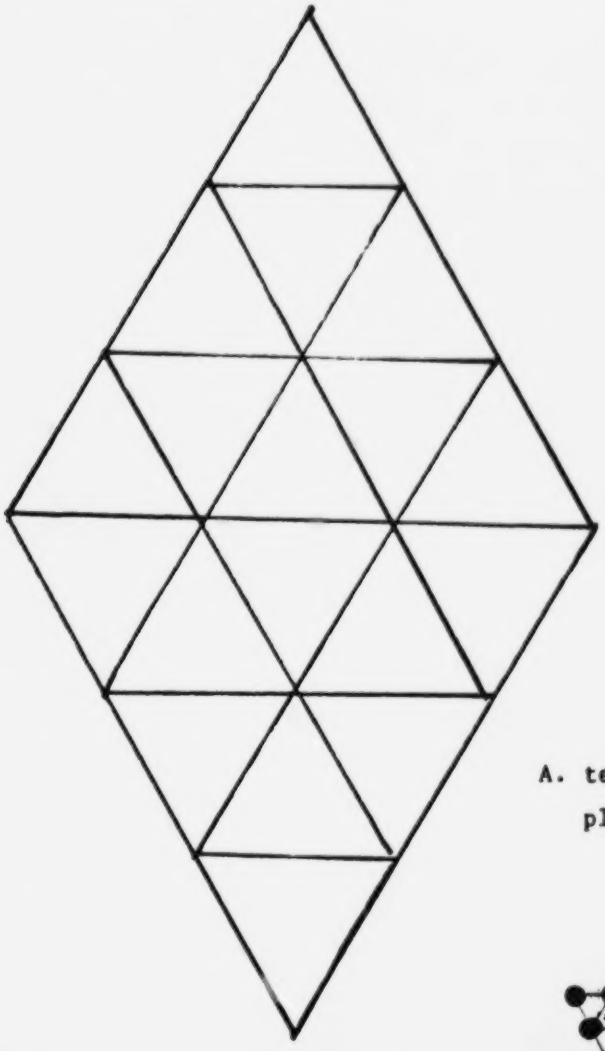
six sheets of colored construction paper (different colors)
scissors
ruler
circle template approximately 1/2" in diameter (or 73 1/2" stick-on dots)
felt tip pen(s)
tape or glue
piece of stiff cardboard or paper at least 14" x 14" (to glue playing star to)
carbon paper (or tracing paper) (optional) to use template on next page

1. Have students make one playing diamond out of each of the six colors. Use the template on the next page, or have students measure and draw their own. All six must be the same size. Using felt markers, draw grid lines to form 18 equilateral triangles.

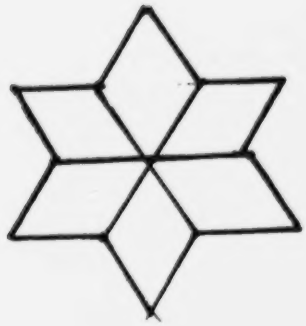
2. Glue or tape the six diamonds together to form a star. (See illustration B, next page).

3. Using the circle template (or stick-on dots), make a circle at every intersection in the grid. (73 total)

4. Using the 1/2" template, cut six circles of each of the six different colored paper. These are the playing pieces.

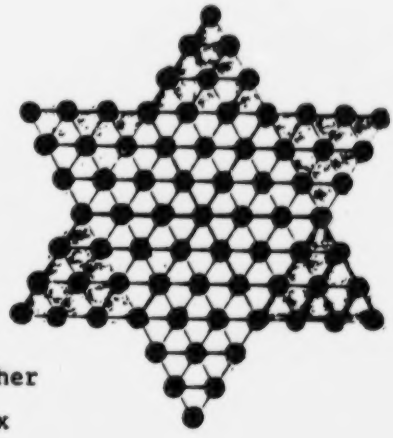


A. template for playing diamonds



B. arrangement of playing diamonds

To play, place your six pieces over the six dots in the point of the star opposite the point which matches the color of your pieces. Your opponent does the same. Begin play by jumping one of your own pieces over another and continue to play, taking turns, until all six of your pieces are in their "own" point.



C. completed board

圍棋

Play WEI QI

WEI QI (pronounced "way chee") is played in China and Japan. In Japan it is known as GO. You can make your own WEI QI game as follows:

Materials:

rubber cement

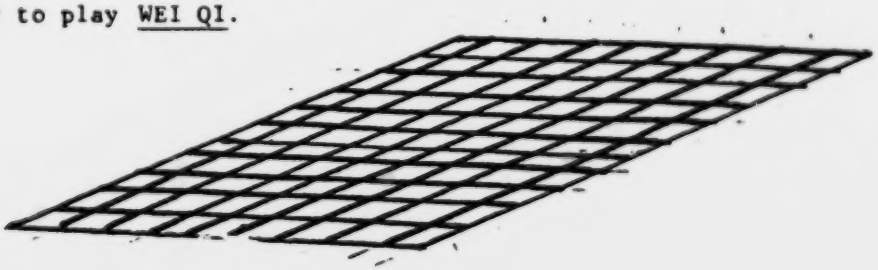
large sheet of green poster board, cut into a square. (approx. 24"x24")

1 sheet of stiff, black cardboard

1 sheet of stiff, white cardboard

scissors, black felt-tip marker and ruler

1. Cement the white sheet of poster board to the black sheet and allow to dry.
2. While waiting for the white/black board to dry, use the marker and ruler and make a grid of lines on the green poster board at 1" or 1½" intervals.
3. Use a fifty-cent piece or so other round object and trace circles onto the black/white board. You will need as many circles as there are squares on your green board. Cut out the circles.
4. You are ready to play WEI QI.



WEI QI

There are several ways to play WEI QI. Here are some of the easier games.

GAME 1:

(This is called GO BANG in Japan.)

The object is to get five pieces of your color (white or black) and to prevent your opponent from getting five pieces of his color in a row.

Black plays first by putting one piece anywhere on the board. White then plays a piece anywhere on the board.

The players continue to alternate turns until one player gets five in a row.

GAME 2:

The object is to play as many of your own pieces and capture as many of your opponent's pieces as possible.

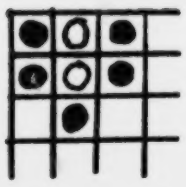
The play begins just as in game one, above. However, instead of just getting five pieces in a row, the object of the game is to continue to place pieces in a straight line (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) across the board. You may capture your opponent's line by placing, at separate turns, a piece of your own color at each end of one of his lines. Then, all the pieces in between are flipped over and become your pieces.

GAME 3:

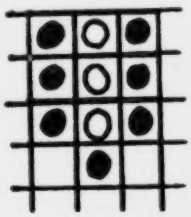
Game three is similar to game two above, but one does not flip the pieces. The object is to capture as many of the opponent's pieces as possible by surrounding them and leaving no empty spaces.

In this game, only horizontally and vertically connected pieces can count. Any group of connected pieces is called a "unit." A unit can be captured by surrounding it, leaving no empty spaces. The captured pieces are removed and held prisoner.

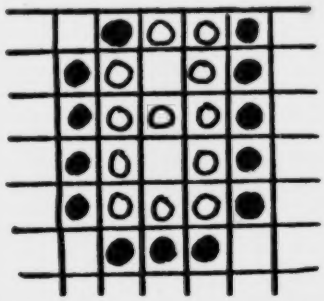
At the end of the game, the player with the most prisoners wins.



Black captures 2-piece white unit.



Black captures 3-piece white unit.



White is not captured because of the two empty spaces inside. If black were to place pieces on the empty spaces, they would become white's prisoners.

象棋

Play **XIANG QI**

THE PIECES

	BLUE		RED	
1.	將	General	帥	General
2.	仕	Officer	士	Officer
3.	象	Statesman	相	Statesman
4.	傌	Cavalry	馬	Cavalry
5.	俥	Chariot	車	Chariot
6.	砲	Cannon	炮	Cannon
7.	卒	Footsoldier	兵	Footsoldoer

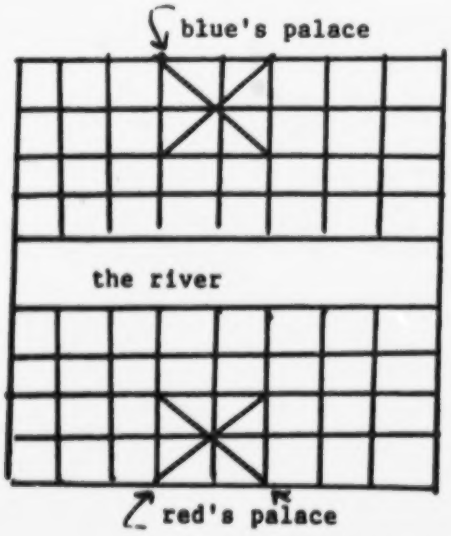
To make:

stiff white cardboard
a fifty-cent piece to trace around
a red marker and a blue marker
a large sheet of butcher paper
ruler, scissors

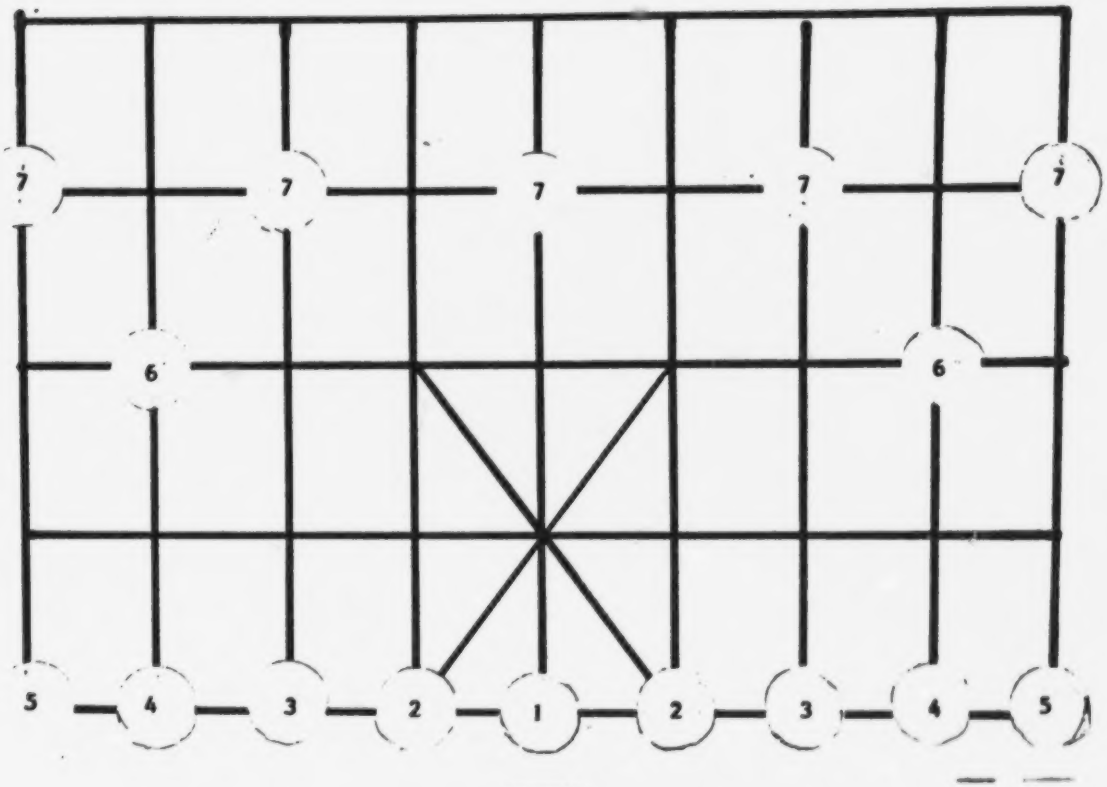
Using the fifty-cent piece or a similar flat, round object, draw 32 circles onto the white cardboard. Cut the pieces out. Sixteen pieces will be blue, and sixteen will be red. Using the colored markers, write the Chinese characters (see p. 13) for each of the pieces as follows: One #1. General, two #2, officers, two #3. statesmen, two #4. cavalry, two #5. chariots, two # 6. cannons, and five #7. footsoldiers. (Note that on some sets, the characters for the same piece are different for the different colors. These are either minor changes or characters which are pronounced the same as the original character, and this is done to further distinguish the two colors.) You may wish to write the English translations onto the circles as well.

On the large sheet of butcher paper, mark off a grid of nine vertical lines, approximately 1-1½ inches apart. Leave the center of the paper unmarked. Now, mark off a series of five horizontal lines 1½ - 2 inches apart, starting at one edge and working in, then start again at the other edge and work in. The unlined section in the middle of the paper is "The River." Now, draw a large "X" (see picture) from the outside corner of the 4th block in the second row to the outside corner of the 5th block in the first row, and vice versa.

the playing board

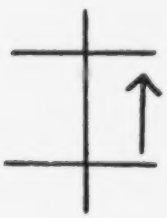


SETTING UP THE BOARD



MOVES

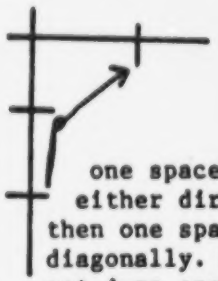
卒兵



7. Foot Soldier

one space, forward only sideways and forward after crossing river.

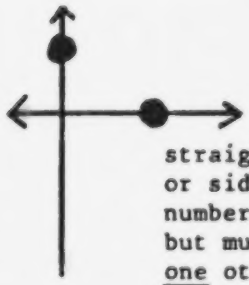
傌馬



4. Cavalry

one space either direction then one space diagonally. May not jump another piece

砲炮

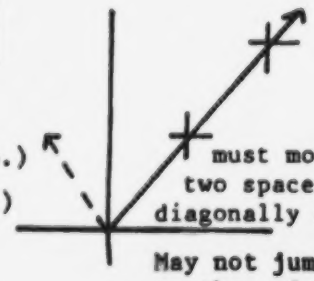


6. Cannon

straight ahead or sideways any number of spaces, but must jump <u>one</u> other piece

象相

a. b.

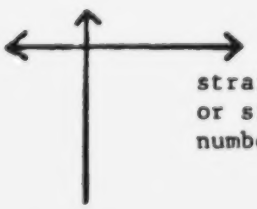


3. Statesman (b.)

(elephant-a.)

must move two spaces diagonally only. May not jump another piece or cross river

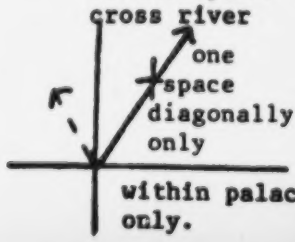
俥車



5. Chariot

straight ahead or sideways any number of spaces

仕士



2. Officer

one space diagonally only within palace only.

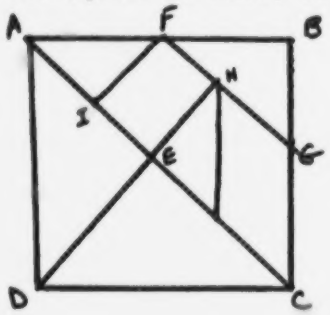
七巧板

Play QIQIAO BAN

QI QIAO BAN (pronounced chee chee-ow bon) literally means "seven piece puzzle," and it is known in English as tangram. The story that most Chinese children know about the origins of qiqiao ban is as follows:

> Once upon a time in ancient China, a man, some say his name was Tan, dropped a square ceramic tile. It fell to the ground and shattered into seven pieces. The man picked up the seven pieces and took them home with the intention of repairing the tile. No matter how hard he tried, though, he could not get the pieces back into the original square. He did find that he could make pictures of animals, people and buildings using all the seven pieces. He became so interested in the shapes that he spent his life making pictures using all seven pieces and found that he could never exhaust the possibilities.

To make a tangram set, make a square of any size on a piece of cardboard. Divide the square in half, diagonally (AC). Divide one half in half again (DE)

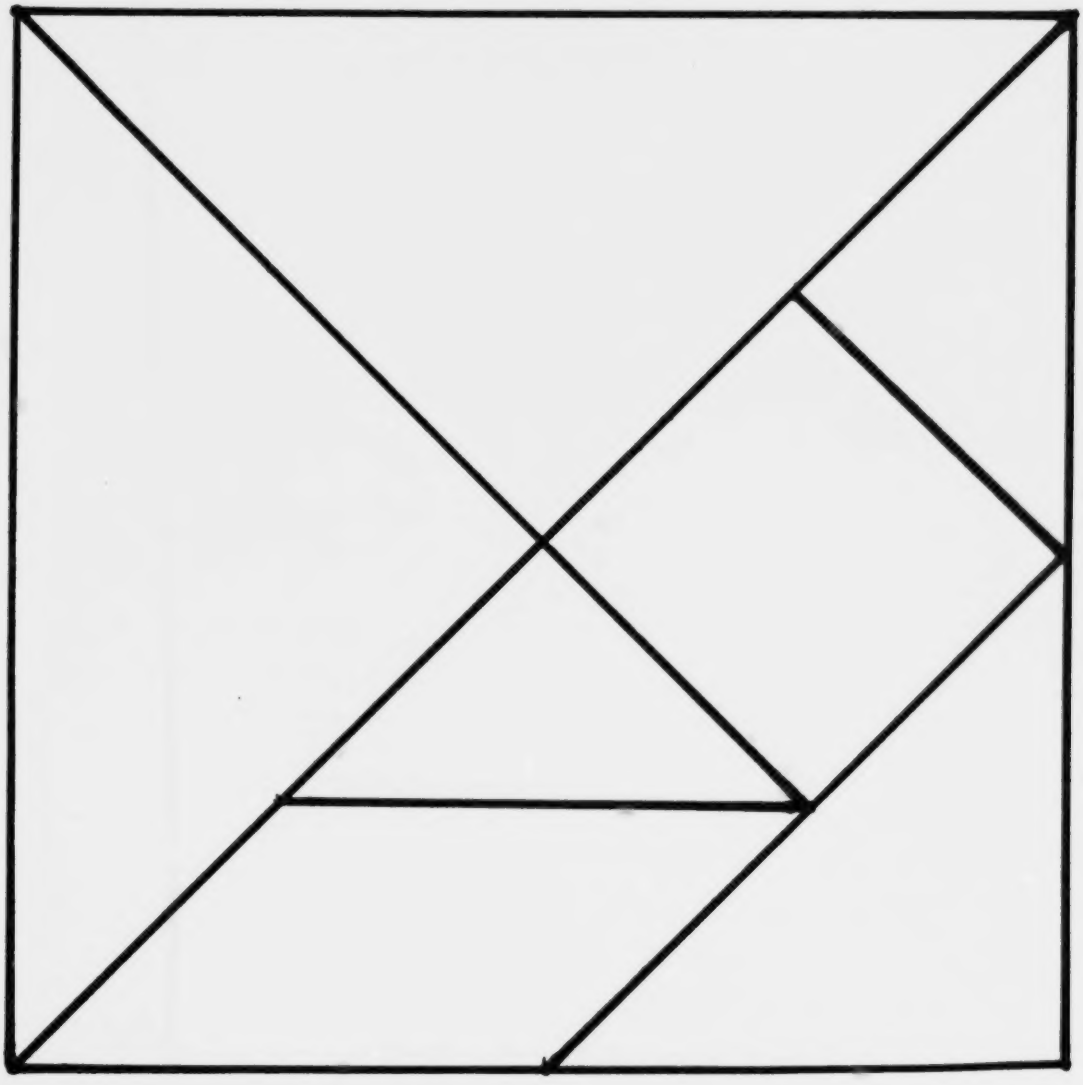


Measure AB and mark the midpoint. Do likewise with BC and connect the points (FG). Measure FG and mark the midpoint. Extend line DE to line FG. Measure lines AE and EC and mark the midpoints. Connect F to the midpoint of AE. This becomes FI. Connect H to the midpoint of EC. Now cut the square along the line you have just drawn.

To play with the qiqiao ban one must use all seven pieces to try to make pictures. None of the shapes may overlap another. A group of children may play by having one child suggest a subject, such as "birds", and the children can either work together with one set to make a picture of a bird, or the children may work each with his own set. When the children have made their "birds," they may compare each others to see how many different ways of making "birds" they could come up with.

For additional activities, see:

Van Note, Peter. Tangrams-- Picture-making Puzzle Game (Charles Tuttle), 1966.



"CHINESE GAMES KIT"

You may wish to assemble a Chinese games kit to keep in your classroom for future activities. The items in the Chinese Games Kit at the East Asian Outreach Resource Center at Yale University are:

1. Ping-pong set with 4 paddles, balls, and portable net. This may be purchased at an import store for less than $10.00.

2. WEI QI. A set may be purchased from JACP (Japanese American Curriculum Project,Inc. 414 East Third Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94401). It is sold under its Japanese name, GO. Alternately, the commercial game "Othello" is a variation of WEIQI. Instructions on making your own set are included in the unit.

3. XIANGQI. A set may be purchased from China Books and Periodicals, Inc. in San Francisco, New York or Chicago. Mail order department, 2929 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 282-2994. You may also make a set.

4. TI JIENZI. Six home-made toys are kept in the set. They may also be purchased in Chinatown in New York or San Francisco.

5. TIAO XIANGPI TIAO can be purchased under the name "Chinese jumpropes" at any toy store for less than $1.00 each. The kit at Yale has four.

6. ZHUAZI. Two home made bags and ten stones are kept in the set. Instructions on how to make the bags are in the unit. Sets may also be purchased in Chinatowns.

7. TIAOQI may be purchased for less than $5.00 at any import store or at any children's toy store under the name "Chinese checkers."

8. QI QIAOBAN are made of stiff cardbaord and kept in manilla envelopes. The book by Peter Van Note, available from Charles Tuttle, also has a small set.